

CLASSIC BOYS LIFE SERIES



MAKING A DOVETAIL JOINT

Fashioning a dovetail joint is a helpful skill to learn and use in making camp gadgets and pioneering projects. A dovetail joint is strong and secure and is used to join two timbers of equal size diameters. The dovetail joint does not require any resources beyond the tools needed to cut the joint, which helps to preserve rope and cordage for other applications.

Start to fashion the joint by making a cut at an angle of approximately 30 degrees. Make the cut to near the middle of the timber.



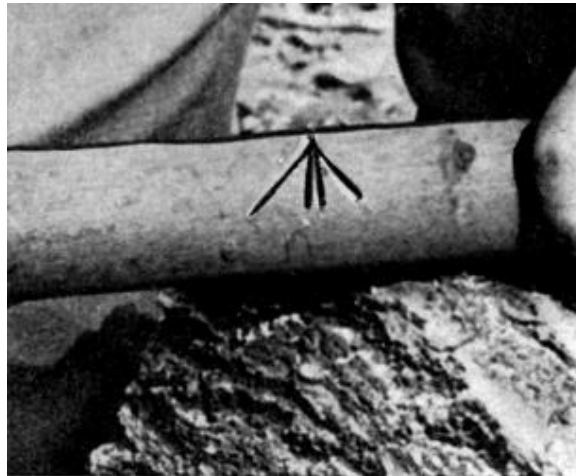
Next make another cut at approximately 30 degrees in the opposite direction of the initial cut, and make the cut the same depth as the first cut.



Then make a cut an angle of approximately 90 degrees, starting from the same initial cut opening. Make the cut to the same depth as the diagonal cuts. Multiple cuts can be made to make it easier to clean out the open area of the joint.



The completed saw cuts should appear similar to the finished cuts in the photograph. All should be at the same depth, and not pass the center of the timber.



Using a pocket knife, or a fixed blade knife, pop out the inner triangle formed by the saw cuts. Even up and smooth out the inner area made by the saw cuts.



The finished triangular cut should be even, and as smooth as possible, but not extend beyond the midpoint of the timber. The notch is ready for fitting a tapered triangular end of the second timber.



Using an ax or knife, carve the end of the second timber into a tapered triangular shape to match the triangle cut into the first timber. Check the carving against the open triangle cut to ensure that not too much material is removed. Taper the end cuts to match the open triangle.



Insert the carved triangular end into the open triangle cut in the first timber to form your dovetail joint. Tap it in securely with a few mild taps from an ax or mallet on the opposite end.

Your dovetail joint is complete.

